Roll back in prices of petrol and diesel

2745. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the frequent hike in prices of petrol and diesel during the last few months have affected adversely on essential commodities;

(b) if so, whether strong protests have been made by various State Governments on such move of the public sector oil companies to hike prices of petrol and diesel;

(c) if so, whether Government propose to roll back hike in price of petrol and diesel in view of sharp criticism; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (d) With the dismantling of Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM) in the petroleum sector effective 1st April 2002, the prices of petrol and diesel have been decontrolled and are no longer fixed by the Government. The oil marketing companies are now fixing the prices of petrol and diesel after taking into account the prevalent international oil prices. Thus, the variations in the international oil prices are likely to be reflected in the domestic prices of petrol and diesel.

The increase in prices of diesel and petroleum impacts directly Wholesale Price Index (WPI) based inflation through their weight in WPI. There is also an additional indirect impact of roughly equal magnitude on WPI based inflation of such increase in the prices of diesel and petroleum.

The Government is monitoring the situation.

Allocation of kerosene oil to Himachal Pradesh

2746. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the per-capita availability and consumption of kerosene oil in Himachal Pradesh, district-wise average; and

(b) the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government to increase the allocation of kerosene oil in Himachal Pradesh, specially in backward, snow bound and far flung areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Government make kerosene allocation to various States/Union Territories for distribution under Public Distribution system (PDS). State Governments/Union Territory Administrations undertake district-wise allocation and distribution of kerosene under PDS to ration card holders indifferent areas, families within the concerned State/Union Territory. As per the allocation approved for the year 2003-2004, Per Capita Allocation of kerosene to the State of Himachal Pradesh is 8.74 Kg. per annum.

Shortage of LPG due to strike

2747. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether shortage of LPG and other petroleum products has been reported in various parts of the country as a result of go-slow agitation by the employees of various public sector oil companies;

(b) if so, whether Government's efforts to resolve the issue with the various unions of the oil companies remained failure; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps taken to resolve the issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (c) The 'work to rule' was resorted to by a section of workmen of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) in Northern, Western and Southern Region during the period 10th March to 21st March, 2003 to raise the issues pertaining to grant of computer advance and maintenance reimbursement, contract labour, restructuring and organisation issues. Further, the unions of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) also went on strike during the period 25th to 27th March, 2003 against the disinvestment of these companies. Due to this, LPG backlog of 2